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### **ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to a group of ~~novel~~-viral RNA regulatory genes, here identified as “viral genomic address messenger genes” or “ VGAM genes”, and as “Viral genomic record” or “ VGR genes”. VGAM genes selectively inhibit translation of known host target genes, and are believed to represent a ~~novel~~-pervasive viral attack mechanism. VGR genes encode an “operon” -like cluster of VGAM genes. VGAM and viral VGR genes may therefore be useful in diagnosing, preventing and treating viral disease. Several nucleic acid molecules are provided respectively encoding several VGAM genes, as are vectors and probes, both comprising the nucleic acid molecules, and methods and systems for detecting VGAM genes, and for counteracting their activity.